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The work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report highlights the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women since its establishment by the General Assembly through its resolution 64/289. The report covers progress made in the work of the Entity in its three mandated functional areas, the impact of that work and significant challenges that have been encountered and remain to be addressed in order to further strengthen the work of the Entity.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly established the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, known as UN-Women, through its resolution 64/289 of 2 July 2010. The resolution consolidated and transferred to the Entity the mandates and functions of four former entities engaged in the field of gender equality and the empowerment of women.[1] UN-Women is a composite entity, functioning as a secretariat and also carrying out operational activities at the country level, and with the additional role of leading, coordinating and promoting the accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly decided to review the work of UN-Women at its sixty-eighth session, and requested the Secretary-General to present to the Assembly at that session a comprehensive report in that regard.

3. Member States have regularly and systematically been informed about the progress of the Entity's work as well as on challenges in delivering on its mandate. In accordance with resolution 64/289, two reports were submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth and sixty-seventh sessions, respectively (A/66/120 and A/67/201). Those reports provided updates on the implementation of the section of General Assembly resolution 64/289 entitled "Strengthening the institutional arrangements for support of gender equality and the empowerment of women", and covered general principles; governance of the Entity; administration and human resources; financing; and transitional arrangements.

4. Member States have also been apprised of the progress of the Entity in reports of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to the Commission on the Status of Women (E/CN.6/2011/2, E/CN.6/2012/2 and E/CN.6/2013/2) and to the Executive Board of UN-Women, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/289. Progress made on the strategic plan of UN-Women for 2011-2013 has also been reported. In all of these, UN-Women provided a holistic picture and many details of its work, including achievements and challenges in its normative support, operational and coordination functions, and the results achieved through the integration of these functions.

5. The present report focuses on progress made in the work of the Entity in its three mandated functional areas, the impact of that work, and significant challenges that have been encountered and remain to be addressed in order to further strengthen the work of the Entity.

II. Progress achieved in the work of UN-Women

A. Overview

6. UN-Women is no longer in its transition or establishment phase. The Entity has successfully integrated the mandates of its four constituent entities. It has

[1] The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat; the United Nations Development Fund for Women; and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

strengthened its structures and staff capacities, including through staff alignment to ensure effective delivery. The strengthening of the regional architecture of the Entity is at an advanced stage. The Entity has fully and proactively assumed its new coordination function and has demonstrated leadership in the development, implementation and monitoring of a United Nations system-wide action plan on gender equality and women's empowerment. The work of UN-Women with its governing bodies — the Commission on the Status of Women and the Executive Board of UN-Women — has also matured, resulting in decisions and resolutions that advance the work of the Entity, as well as the global work on gender equality and women's empowerment. The Entity is thus clearly much stronger than it was at its establishment and much more robust than any of its constituent entities in the past.

B. Implementing the normative support mandate

7. From its establishment, UN-Women contributed significantly to strengthening the global normative and policy framework for gender equality and the empowerment of women. This contribution and value-added have progressively expanded and now include substantive and technical expertise, advocacy, awareness-raising, alliance-building and outreach to Member States and other stakeholders. Support is provided to gender-specific bodies and processes to reaffirm and strengthen existing gender equality norms and standards, highlight gaps in implementation and formulate policy recommendations, especially the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and the Security Council on items pertaining to gender equality. UN-Women increasingly works to support sectoral areas and processes, including global conferences and their review and follow-up processes, in order to strengthen and amplify gender perspectives in these processes.

Commission on the Status of Women

8. UN-Women serves as the substantive secretariat of the Commission on the Status of Women, which evaluates progress, identifies challenges, sets global standards and formulates concrete policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide. In that capacity, the Entity supports all aspects of the work of the Commission, and has effectively contributed to the increased visibility and impact of the Commission. The Entity contributions to the work of the Commission help to support and enhance its highly visible role in the intergovernmental landscape as the principal global policymaking body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

9. Since assuming this responsibility in 2011, UN-Women has prepared important substantive inputs for the Commission annual sessions, providing analysis and evidence on the status of gender equality and recommendations for further action in regard to the priority themes and other thematic issues considered by the Commission. Building on its composite nature, UN-Women has brought richer operational experiences to bear on the content of reports, issues papers and other substantive documentation for the Commission. Beyond providing expertise and support to the Chair and Bureau, UN-Women increasingly focused on mobilization of all stakeholders to enhance commitment and strengthen outcomes. Interactive events and panel discussions organized by UN-Women provided opportunities for different stakeholders to share lessons learned in implementation of existing

commitments, and to identify steps and measures for further action. All of these efforts have enhanced deliberations of Member States, exchange of experience and good practice, and negotiations of outcomes.

10. UN-Women drew upon the lessons learned in supporting the Commission and other intergovernmental processes since 2011 to undertake year-long preparations for the fifty-seventh session of the Commission, which led to the historic and successful outcome and agreed conclusions on preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls in March 2013. This comprehensive approach to preparations will constitute the regular modus operandi of the Entity going forward.

General Assembly

11. UN-Women has continued to support and contribute to the work of the General Assembly under its gender-specific items in the Second and Third Committees, including policy analysis and recommendations in reports of the Secretary-General, and by providing substantive and technical expertise. This has enabled Member States to strengthen commitments and further expand the normative frameworks to guide actions to promote gender equality and empower women, including those in rural areas and migrant workers. Support has also been provided for the work of the General Assembly on violence against women and girls, trafficking, ending female genital mutilation, and women in development. Resolutions that have emerged from deliberations on these issues have not only provided stronger foundations for interventions at the country level, but they have also given strong impetus to the work of the Entity in these areas.

12. General Assembly resolution 66/130, on women and political participation, exemplifies the informal processes increasingly used by the Entity to enhance intergovernmental outcomes. Inspired by a side event convened by UN-Women and other partners and a joint statement signed by 16 women in senior leadership positions, including several heads of State and Government, the resolution demonstrates the catalytic role that UN-Women can play in bringing needed attention to important gender equality issues.

13. UN-Women's analysis of the extent to which gender perspectives are reflected in the work of the General Assembly and its Main Committees during the sixty-sixth and sixty-seventh sessions has drawn attention to areas of the work of the Assembly that require stronger mainstreaming of a gender perspective (see A/66/211 and A/67/185). The findings from these reports became the basis for UN-Women to increase substantive and technical support on gender equality perspectives to Member States, enabling them to expand attention in resolutions such as those on trade and development, agricultural development, migration, sustainable development and disarmament.

14. Substantive contributions that UN-Women made to the General Assembly 2012 high-level debate on the rule of law helped to secure strong language and concrete commitments from Member States, including in the declaration adopted on the occasion. The importance of the outcomes of that debate cannot be overestimated as women's access to justice is recognized as a key determinant of the achievement of gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment. Promoting the outcomes of that high-level debate remains central to the work that UN-Women does to promote gender equality and empower women.

Security Council

15. The quality and consistency of information in the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security, which UN-Women prepares on an annual basis in collaboration with relevant entities of the United Nations system, has been strengthened through reporting on specific indicators on the implementation of Council resolutions on this topic. The establishment of UN-Women provided new and strengthened previously existing opportunities to collaborate with partners in areas such as peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict, conflict-prevention and peacebuilding, and the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies. This has produced better evidence and gender-specific recommendations in relevant reports of the Secretary-General, thus strengthening the basis for the Security Council's consideration and action. Briefings provided to the Council on an ad hoc basis by the head of the Entity since 2011 have also contributed to greater reflection of gender perspectives across the Council agenda. At the same time, the co-lead role of the Entity with the Peacebuilding Support Office in implementing the seven-point action plan of the Secretary-General on gender-responsive peacebuilding, and through its role in monitoring implementation of the system-wide strategic results framework on women and peace and security, has resulted in increased United Nations coherence.

Economic and Social Council

16. UN-Women has contributed significantly to supporting the Economic and Social Council in promoting and monitoring the progress of work on gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system. The substantive work of the Entity has provided the basis for annual resolutions on the topic whose negotiation receives close support by the Entity. The contributions of the Entity also resulted in strengthened attention to gender equality perspectives in the work of the Council during the annual ministerial reviews and development cooperation forums, as well as in its operational activities segments, where the Entity now regularly provides substantive and advocacy inputs. UN-Women made contributions to the preparations of the Economic and Social Council for the quadrennial comprehensive policy review that enabled Member States to adopt a resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, which included considerable attention to gender perspectives. The contributions of UN-Women underscored the message that the work on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment was a common responsibility of the United Nations system and that the creation of UN-Women should not relieve other agencies of the mandate to deliver on gender equality and women's empowerment. Also underscored was the importance of accountability mechanisms, including the United Nations system-wide action plan on gender equality and women's empowerment as tools to hold agencies accountable and ensure gender mainstreaming in their work.

Engagement with sectoral intergovernmental processes

17. The strategic expansion of the Entity's engagement with sectoral intergovernmental processes to promote their incorporation of gender perspectives is a clear indication of the strength of the Entity and its value-added. This work is an integral component of the mandate of UN-Women, responds to expectations from stakeholders and goes well beyond efforts that were undertaken by the predecessor entities of UN-Women.

18. The engagement of UN-Women throughout the entire process surrounding the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012, exemplifies this value-added. UN-Women provided substantive, technical and advocacy inputs that contributed to ensuring that gender equality and women's empowerment were recognized as key priorities as well as a cross-cutting issue in sustainable development in its three dimensions. The outcome document of the Conference reinforced the coordination mandate of the Entity in regard to sustainable development, and the Entity now contributes to a range of work streams on follow-up to the Conference.

19. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development[2] called for the establishment of an open working group and the elaboration of a proposal on sustainable development goals, coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. Given the potential far-reaching and long-lasting impact of this undertaking on the global community's development direction, UN-Women is investing significant effort to provide substantive and technical expertise and advocacy inputs to ensure that the future development framework builds on the Millennium Development Goals, incorporates gender equality and women's empowerment in a comprehensive way, and accelerates the achievement of the goal of gender equality. Towards this end, UN-Women is advocating for a stand-alone gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment goal and for the full integration of aspects of gender equality in all other goals through gender-sensitive targets and indicators. The Entity is also providing the evidence and analysis that support this proposal, and serves as convenor for stakeholders to share views and insights thereon.

20. The work of UN-Women, in partnership with other actors, has supported the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change over the last two years, resulting in the recognition that gender equality and the active participation of women are important for effective action on all aspects of climate change. The decision of the eighteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on women's participation set a goal on gender balance in representation in bodies established under the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol and in the composition of parties' delegations, and requires annual reporting on progress made. UN-Women will provide support accordingly.

21. UN-Women played an active and catalytic role in a number of other intergovernmental processes that resulted in increased attention to gender perspectives and significant gains in outcomes. That was the case with regard to the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,[3] adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul in 2011; the 2011 high-level meeting on AIDS; and the thirteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Building on mandates from these outcomes, UN-Women has increased cooperation and collaboration with a range of stakeholders to further build evidence and knowledge, create spaces to give voice to women to share experiences and influence policymaking, and through targeted regional and country interventions.

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[2] Resolution 66/288, annex.

[3] *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011* (A/CONF.219/7), chap. II.

22. UN-Women continued to be fully engaged in the further development of normative frameworks to advance women's human rights and supported implementation at the country level, coordinating this effort with, in particular, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Towards this end, the Entity provides technical support to and cooperates with human rights mechanisms, including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in areas including the elaboration of general recommendations. At the same time, UN-Women offers capacity-building and training and convenes consultations for States parties, civil society and United Nations country teams on reporting under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[4] and follow-up to the concluding observations of the Committee and on other aspects of women's human rights.

Knowledge hub, data and communications and outreach

23. Since its establishment, UN-Women has placed great emphasis on expanding its capacity to serve as a global knowledge hub with regard to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, through research, analysis and data and evidence gathering. It has also worked to harness experience acquired and lessons learned from its operational work. Building on functions of its predecessor entities, UN-Women has expanded the identification, the development and the dissemination of methodologies, tools and examples of good practice with a focus on the thematic priorities in its strategic plan. It is also increasing the availability of databases and other knowledge products and of communities of practice for the benefit of all stakeholders. This capacity is especially critical as it underpins three functions of the Entity and is the source for evidence-based analysis for intergovernmental discussions and decision-making; technical and advisory services to Member States, at their request; and good practice to support the coordination function.

24. UN-Women has continued and expanded initiatives that were in place at the time of its establishment, such as the Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls (http://www.endvawnow.org/), the Secretary-General's database on violence against women (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/v-database.htm) and the knowledge portal on gender-responsive budgeting (www.gender-budgets.org), which facilitates knowledge sharing. New initiatives include the Knowledge Gateway for Women's Economic Empowerment, to be launched in September 2013 (www.empowerwomen.org), and the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality programme, which works with national statistical offices to improve evidence-based policymaking through greater availability of high-quality gender statistics (see E/CN.3/2013/10). A new searchable database of provisions relating to gender equality contained in constitutions across the world is under development and expected to be launched by September 2013 (http://constitutions.unwomen.org).

25. Given the importance of advocacy, influence and leverage to the work of UN-Women in its three main functions, communications have taken on an increasingly central role since the establishment of the Entity. By early 2013, UN-Women had achieved extensive global reach, positioning the Entity as the leading global voice on gender equality and women's empowerment. This was most clearly demonstrated on the occasion of International Women's Day and the fifty-seventh

[4] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held in 2013. As part of the UN-Women COMMIT initiative, 57 Governments pledged concrete new actions to end violence against women. UN-Women monitored media coverage about the Commission in more than 50 countries through leading international media outlets, and the Entity's media partnerships resulted in strengthened coverage of its work and gender equality issues. Consistent growth also occurred on UN-Women's social media channels, with audiences doubling from 189,000 followers on 1 January 2012 to 371,000 at the end of 2012, and an eightfold increase from 2010. Following an initial effort in 2011 and its expansion in 2012, social media were fully integrated into the work of the Commission in 2013, reaching 28 million unique users in March 2013. Content on the corporate website of the Entity grew by 140 per cent during 2012. The successful global advocacy initiative of the Entity "Say NO — UNiTE to End Violence against Women", has recorded since its inception over 5.5 million actions and close to 900 civil society partners.

C. Responding to the coordination mandate

26. Upon the establishment of UN-Women, the General Assembly singled out as an additional role for the Entity the task of leading, coordinating and promoting the accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women, including on gender mainstreaming. UN-Women has risen to this mandate and built up this function systematically, especially by working through inter-agency forums at the global, regional and national levels.

27. The Entity assumed its global-level leadership role in United Nations system coordination with its membership, as of the fourth quarter of 2010, in the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), the High-level Committee on Programmes, and the High-level Committee on Management, and as the Chair of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. From the outset, UN-Women ensured that a gender perspective was integrated into system-wide policy decisions and recommendations. This is evident, for example, in the strong gender equality components in the statement made by CEB to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries of 2011 and in the proposed recommendations and outcomes provided as an input to the high-level dialogue on international migration and development of the General Assembly of September 2013. It is also evident in the system-wide action plan for youth, adopted in 2013, where UN-Women is now working in partnership with other entities on implementation, including the development of comprehensive and evidence-based employment and livelihoods programmes targeting disadvantaged young men and women. Based on the substantive and technical expertise and inputs of the Entity, the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience, also of 2013, incorporates gender perspectives.

28. At present, UN-Women chairs or co-chairs 15 global coordination mechanisms or processes on issues ranging from the Millennium Development Goal Task Force to the United Nations Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality, and is a member of approximately 100 other coordination processes at any given time.

29. Notably in 2012, UN-Women exercised its coordination mandate to lead the development of the first United Nations system-wide action plan on gender equality and women's empowerment, for greater accountability, and supported its roll-out

across the system through a help desk and workshops. United Nations entities are reporting on their performance against the indicators of the action plan, with UN-Women compiling and analysing the reports of entities and supporting them in both reporting and remedying gaps and deficiencies. With the first round of reporting completed in 2013, the results provide the initial baseline for the system's performance on gender mainstreaming at the corporate level. Fifty-five entities reported, constituting 82 per cent of those required to do so. UN-Women included a summary of the results in a report to the Economic and Social Council in July 2013.

30. The United Nations system-wide action plan on gender equality and women's empowerment has already resulted in significant and immediate shifts in the manner in which the United Nations system approaches work related to gender equality and women's empowerment, and gender mainstreaming. Clear and agreed upon standards for mainstreaming gender perspectives have been established across the system, thus increasing coherence, coordination and knowledge management; a harmonized reporting system has been developed to identify strengths and weaknesses related to work on gender equality and the empowerment of women both within individual entities and across the United Nations system; and decentralization of responsibility and revitalization of work on gender equality and the empowerment of women across the United Nations system have been realized. At the same time, targeted action continues to be needed, if the United Nations system as a whole is to meet or exceed, by 2017, requirements in all performance indicators of the action plan. UN-Women will offer support and technical assistance to help reach this goal.

31. Also at the global level, UN-Women worked to revitalize the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. Within the Network, as well as the UNDG Task Team on Gender Equality, UN-Women placed special emphasis on ensuring that the United Nations system provided coordinated inputs and support to key intergovernmental processes, such as the process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, the post-2015 agenda discussions, and the consultations on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities. This leadership strengthened the capacity of the United Nations system to speak with "one voice" on gender equality issues and delivered substantive inputs and advocacy platforms and mobilization of stakeholders. A further example of enhanced coordination is a statement on ending violence against women, signed by 11 agency heads in March 2013, which provides a strong basis for collaborative action in support of the implementation of the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women. The Entity's inventory of United Nations system activities to prevent and eliminate violence against women also contributes to better coordination across the system.

32. At its establishment, UN-Women assumed the leadership and coordination of the campaign of the Secretary-General, "UNiTE to End Violence against Women", which implements strategies and activities at the global, regional and national levels, in close collaboration with the Campaign working group. The UNiTE Campaign has been instrumental in consolidating in a number of United Nations country teams a shared and coherent approach to efforts to end violence against women and girls.

33. At the national level, one of the highest priorities of UN-Women is to ensure the capacity of United Nations country teams and the Resident Coordinator system

to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Entity has expanded its efforts to lead and/or support United Nations country teams in mainstreaming gender equality perspectives into programme planning and implementation. UN-Women offices in all eight "Delivering as one" pilot countries have invested particular efforts to ensure coordinated support and advocacy for gender equality and women's empowerment by the United Nations system, including through substantive inputs and technical advice. Overall, UN-Women now leads or co-leads 62 out of 113 gender theme groups at the national level.

34. Analysis of annual reports of the Resident Coordinator identified joint initiatives on gender equality in 115 United Nations country teams, up from 43 in 2004; 62 United Nations country teams helped Governments to integrate gender equality into national strategy documents, up from 17 in 2004. United Nations country teams also supported improvements in national laws and policies on gender equality in 73 countries, up from 11 in 2004. The number of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks that include gender equality as a cross-cutting issue has increased from 41 in 2004 to 58 in 2012. This evidence of growing United Nations system coordination provides the impetus for an even more concerted effort by UN-Women.

35. UN-Women is enhancing its participation in joint programmes with partner agencies at the country level. The Entity is currently active in 104 such programmes that cover areas including ending violence against women, strengthening gender perspectives in national planning, women's economic empowerment, and conflict prevention and social cohesion. UN-Women also promotes the use of the United Nations country teams performance indicators for gender equality and women's empowerment for common country planning processes, which have recently been completed in four countries (Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Kenya, Maldives and Rwanda), bringing the total number of United Nations country teams that have completed these scorecards to 28 since they started to be used in 2008.

D. Implementing the operational activities mandate

36. The General Assembly established UN-Women with a mandate to assist countries and the United Nations system to progress more effectively and efficiently towards the goal of achieving gender equality, women's empowerment and upholding women's rights. From the outset, and as elaborated in its first strategic plan, for the period 2011-2013, UN-Women has closely linked its normative support and coordination function, and operational activities providing on-the-ground support for national development effort. The coordination function and operations of UN-Women at the country level support implementation of international and regional norms and standards, while also informing the development of those norms and standards with country-level realities through advocacy, policy, knowledge and strategic partnerships.

37. A key component of the effort of the Entity to strengthen its capacity to deliver results for women and girls at the national level has been the improvement of effectiveness and efficiency through decentralization. This required adaptation of inherited structures to respond to changes in operating environments, such as increased regional initiatives, greater South-South cooperation and marked increases in national capacity in many countries. To achieve these improvements and changes,

UN-Women consolidated and strengthened capacities at the regional level and devolved certain oversight functions from headquarters to the regional level.

38. The new regional architecture of UN-Women, approved by its Executive Board in November 2011, has since resulted in the consolidation and expansion of its regional and country presences, which empowers senior leaders in the field to make strategic decisions that are responsive to national and regional priorities and ensure effective cooperation with the United Nations system. While at the end of 2011 UN-Women had 17 offices with full representation, by the end of 2012 this presence had grown to 54 such representations, consisting of 48 country and 6 multi-country offices. Of the 48 country offices, 19 are located in Africa, 4 in Arab States, 9 in the Asia and Pacific region, 6 in Europe and Central Asia and 10 in the Americas and Caribbean.

39. Multi-country offices are located in Barbados, Fiji, India, Kazakhstan, Morocco and South Africa. The use of multi-country offices responds to increased requests for UN-Women support, while recognizing that UN-Women does not have the capacity or resources to open country offices in every country requesting support.

40. Of the planned six regional offices, five have been set up with varying levels of staffing completed by June 2013 (Egypt, Kenya, Panama, Senegal and Thailand), located in the United Nations common regional hubs. While the six regional offices have the capacity to perform day-to-day programmatic oversight and technical advisory and operational support functions for the country offices, global oversight, strategic orientation and advisory functions are located at UN-Women headquarters level.

41. The six priorities of the 2011-2013 strategic plan guide the programmatic work of UN-Women. These are:

(a) Women lead and participate in decision-making at all levels;

(b) Women, especially the poorest and most excluded, are economically empowered and benefit from development;

(c) Women and girls live a life free from violence;

(d) Peace and security and humanitarian action are shaped by women's leadership and participation;

(e) Governance and national planning fully reflect accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities;

(f) A comprehensive and dynamic set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and women's empowerment is in place and is applied through action by Governments and other stakeholders at all levels.

42. As at the end of 2012, UN-Women had delivered support in 87 programme countries, and was on track against 23 of 29 strategic plan indicators. For example, 17 countries had incorporated temporary special measures for women in constitutions, legal frameworks and policies; 11 countries saw political parties field more women candidates in national elections; 27 countries had adopted or strengthened policies to protect the most economically vulnerable groups of women; 22 countries had adopted national action plans to end violence against women and girls; 18 countries had developed national action plans to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000); and 9 countries had measures in place to detect and

prevent sexual violence in conflict. National planning documents in 28 countries incorporated priorities and budgets on gender equality and women's empowerment; and 20 countries had in place systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment. In 10 countries supported by UN-Women, women living with HIV were able to influence formal planning and review mechanisms for the national response to HIV.

43. The operational work of UN-Women is demand-driven and responds to requests for support from Member States and other stakeholders, reaffirming the centrality of national ownership. Within this overall context, UN-Women supports capacity development as the foundation strategy for effective and sustainable development. The Entity provides substantive expertise and technical advice on the thematic priorities covered in its strategic plan, and in accordance with government requests. It serves as convenor of stakeholders and provides spaces for women to make their voices heard and influence national development processes. It advocates for and helps build alliances for the realization of equality for women and girls at country level.

E. Expanding partnerships

44. From its establishment UN-Women has placed a premium on working in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, at different levels, including civil society and the United Nations system in an effort to help accelerate progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment. The Entity built on, and consolidated and expanded, the existing practice of close consultation with civil society organizations.

45. Over the last 30 months, the Entity has institutionalized its relationship with civil society with the establishment of a global civil society advisory group in 2012, which today includes 30 groups at the regional and national levels. They constitute a mechanism for regular dialogue on policy, programming, normative and intergovernmental activities, and help accelerate their implementation. They are also channels for UN-Women to help amplify the voices of civil society, including women at the grass-roots level, in policy- and decision-making forums. Facilitation by UN-Women of the participation of a steadily increasing number of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council in the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women has also expanded opportunities for their interaction with Member States and their effective contribution to the sessions.

46. UN-Women's successful partnership-building efforts are also evident in its membership in the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), which UN-Women has joined as its eleventh co-sponsor, and its participation in the H4+ group, whose members serve as the lead technical partners for the United Nations Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health. These have enabled UN-Women to provide substantial contributions to form a gender equality perspective and to act as a catalyst for gender mainstreaming. In this regard, the Entity has brought added value to the Education First Initiative and Sustainable Energy for All by highlighting gender perspectives and advocating for attention to gender equality considerations. It has engaged in thematic areas such as

the World Water Week, the World Urban Forum and forums dealing with information and communications technology.

47. UN-Women signed new memorandums of understanding with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), increasing its linkages across the United Nations system. UN-Habitat created an advisory group on gender issues, in which UN-Women actively participates to support mainstreaming gender perspectives into the urban development agenda. These partnerships have also been instrumental in expanding joint programmes, such as the Safe and Sustainable Cities for All programme, a joint programme with UN-Habitat and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) aimed at ensuring that public spaces are safe and free from violence against women and girls. Through its co-leadership of the global working group on migration, human rights and gender, UN-Women ensures that the linkages between migration and development are addressed in practical and action-oriented ways and from a gender perspective. The group's support for, and interaction with, the Global Forum on Migration and Development is contributing to strengthened attention to gender perspectives in migration.

48. In an effort to accelerate progress towards the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment, UN-Women fostered partnerships with many other stakeholders, including academic institutions, the media and the business community, and is working with corporations and foundations to diversify its funding base. In 2012 UN-Women received over $5,200,000 from private sector partners and foundations, including Coca-Cola Company, Microsoft, Zonta International, Rockefeller Foundation, Women's Self Worth Foundation and Loomba Foundation. This is an increase of 460 per cent above private sector funds raised in 2010. UN-Women is also working with the International Olympic Committee at the global and national levels to support women leadership initiatives.

49. UN-Women benefits from the activities of 18 national committees, which gradually increased their awareness-raising, outreach and fundraising activities in support of UN-Women, also owing to the capacity development efforts that the Entity extended to them. International Women's Day celebrations and priority themes of the Commission on the Status of Women have proven to be particularly effective entry points for their work. Overall, national committees contributed $1,241,388 in 2012, up from $823,000 in 2011, while also advocating for increased government contributions.

50. In 2012, 292 Chief Executive Officers of companies in 17 countries signed the Chief Executive Officers' Statement of Support for the UN-Women/United Nations Global Compact Women's Empowerment Principles, bringing the total number of signatures to 534. This set of principles for business offer guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community. In order to enhance their impact, the Global Compact and UN-Women have issued guidance to support companies' implementation efforts and encourage greater transparency and accountability. A dedicated website features key tools, resources and guidance materials and serves as a platform for knowledge sharing and exchange of good practices (http://weprinciples.unglobalcompact.org/Site/ToolsAndReportingWepMaterials/).

F. Management and administration

51. From the very outset, UN-Women focused on quickly building an effective and efficient institution, especially with regard to its strategic orientation, organizational structure and management of its financial and human resources. It has also put in place its evaluation and audit functions.

52. The Entity's first strategic plan 2011-2013 set out in June 2011 a vision, mission and six priorities of the operational response of the Entity, emphasizing the commitment to make a difference in the daily lives of women and girls. An update of the strategic plan for the period 2014-2017 is in the process of being finalized. With the endorsement by the Executive Board of the Entity of the regional architecture, the institutional structure of the Entity for the delivery of its three main functions was completed.

53. UN-Women adopted the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) as at 1 January 2012, supported by the approval by the Executive Board of amendments to the financial regulations. In line with actions taken by other executive boards, in early February 2013 the Executive Board of UN-Women decided on a road map towards an integrated budget, beginning in 2014, and an update on cost recovery, approving harmonized methodology for calculating cost-recovery rates. UN-Women will apply these as at 1 January 2014.

54. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women, as at 1 January 2011, was given delegated authority in matters pertaining to human resources management (see ST/SGB/2011/2). The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director has since exercised this authority in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, including the appointment of staff members of UN-Women through the issuance of letters of appointment. The Entity undertook two alignment processes, first to consolidate the four former United Nations entities into UN-Women at Headquarters, and second to implement its regional architecture. These processes have resulted in a coherent workforce at Headquarters and in the field.

55. Since June 2011, steps have been taken towards securing adequate staff representation for UN-Women through a transparent and participatory process. A referendum was conducted in January 2013 on options for a UN-Women staff representation; over 60 per cent of respondents expressed support for joining the Staff Council of UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS); almost 25 per cent supported the creation of an independent UN-Women staff association; and 13 per cent opted for joining the United Nations Staff Union. The Staff Council welcomed the outcome of the voting process, and subsequently became the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN-Women Staff Council.

56. UN-Women has taken steps to establish a credible, useful and independent evaluation function, which is encapsulated in the evaluation policy approved by the Executive Board in 2012. The evaluation function strengthens the Entity work and results-based management by contributing to organizational transparency, learning and accountability, and supporting the Entity in its efforts to produce better results for women with timely and strategic information on the performance of UN-Women policies, programmes and initiatives. Two corporate thematic evaluations are ongoing, on violence against women, and on women and peace and security, respectively. The UN-Women evaluation office is also leading the joint evaluation

of joint gender equality programmes, a collaborative effort with UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, the Millennium Development Goal Fund, and the Governments of Spain and Norway.

57. Steps have been taken to increase the UN-Women management response to, and utilization of, evaluations since 2011. The global accountability and tracking of evaluation use system ensures that knowledge gained from evaluations becomes an integral part of the UN-Women organizational learning process. UN-Women created the gender equality evaluation portal as a tool to strengthen and promote the exchange of evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations. The Entity has also established partnerships with regional evaluation networks in Africa, the Asia-Pacific region, Europe and Central Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to promote national and regional evaluation capacity development and deliver professional trainings on integrating gender equality dimensions into evaluation.

58. Audits of UN-Women activities are carried out by both external and internal auditors. The United Nations Board of Auditors carried out the external audit of the accounts of UN-Women for 2011 and issued its report (A/67/5/Add.13 and Corr.1). The 2012 external audit of the performance and financial position of UN-Women as reported under IPSAS was completed at the end of May 2013. Following Rule 2302 of its financial regulations and rules, the internal audit function of the Entity is performed under a service-level agreement by the Office of Audit and Investigations of UNDP. In accordance with decision 2012/10 of the Executive Board of UN-Women, all internal audit reports issued after 1 December 2012 are made publicly available. The first such internal audit report, for UN-Women Afghanistan, was made available in this manner in May 2013. In October 2012 UN-Women created a five-member audit advisory committee to advise the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women in fulfilling her responsibilities regarding oversight, financial management and reporting, internal audit and investigation, external audit, risk management and systems of internal control and accountability. The audit advisory committee will present its first annual report and findings to the Executive Board in September 2013.

59. As the Entity is expanding its global footprint through the regional architecture, decentralized decision-making is required. In order to strengthen accountability and transparency of operations, UN-Women launched its new internal control and delegation of authority frameworks in November 2012. These frameworks set out the level of assigned authority for decision-making throughout the Entity and contribute to the effective and efficient management of organizational risks. At the same time, the Entity launched its anti-fraud hotline to allow vendors, contractors, staff and members of the public to report any wrongdoing through the United Nations Ethics Office/UNDP Office of Audit and Investigation reporting mechanisms. To further enhance transparency and accountability for the use of donor funds, UN-Women became a signatory to the International Aid Transparency Initiative in May 2012 and has published its first phase of programme/project data.

III. Challenges and constraints

60. UN-Women has achieved considerable success in its work and is well positioned to achieve even more. However, it has also encountered some of the constraints and challenges expected of a new entity with a new mandate, including that of system-

wide coordination. Many of these challenges have been successfully addressed, but some continue to receive attention in order to ensure that the entity matures and remains fully responsive to the vision with which it was established.

61. For example, while UN-Women is steadily working towards strengthening the linkages between the normative and operational work it supports, an implementation gap persists. With its growing capacity on the ground, UN-Women is increasingly able to provide support to Member States to implement changes that improve the daily realities of women and girls at the national level. However, closing the implementation gap and turning commitments into action requires intensified and concerted action not only by UN-Women, but by all stakeholders, especially Member States.

62. The experience of UN-Women in leading the successful roll-out of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and its monitoring clearly indicate that the Entity's additional mandate of leading, coordinating and ensuring the accountability of the United Nations system for its work on gender equality requires substantial investment. The development of appropriate, comprehensive and effective modalities for the coordination work at headquarters and field levels is undoubtedly on course, but it will need more time to mature. This is particularly so given that there are multiple agencies, inter-agency networks and coordination mechanisms at the global, country and regional levels requiring considerable capacity and investment from UN-Women.

Availability of resources

63. Achieving an adequate resource base to support the work of the Entity has been the greatest challenge UN-Women has experienced so far. In a difficult financial climate and with continued structural underfunding of the gender equality architecture and the low starting resource baselines, this is likely to remain the biggest challenge for UN-Women in the years to come.

64. Overall, in 2012, 33 Member States provided an increased core contribution, with a third of pledges being multi-year. There were increases in core contributions from 6 of the UN-Women top 10 donors, namely Australia, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Switzerland and the United States of America. The donor base also broadened, reaching 113 in 2012. Switzerland and Germany also became new donors for the Fund for Gender Equality.

65. However, these gains could not compensate for the almost $28 million decrease in core resources from some of the Entity's key donors. As a result of this shortfall, the ambitious funding goals set out by the Secretary-General in 2009, which envisaged a resources portfolio in the range of $500 million annually, are not yet within reach.

66. Targets for 2011 to 2013 were reduced from the initial expectations of $500 million annually to a total of $700 million for the biennium 2012-2013. Yet, even these lower targets were missed by significant amounts. This was despite efforts and successes in expanding partnerships and the non-traditional donor base. The number of donors increased, and there was modest success in leveraging funding from and establishing new partnerships with the private sector and foundations. As a result, for 2012, there was an overall revenue shortfall for the year of $92.2 million — a 9 per cent drop from 2011.

67. Given the mandate of UN-Women, its high dependence on voluntary contributions from Governments, and the demands from stakeholders for the delivery of measurable results, the expectations and commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women need to be matched by resources. Without this, the resources afforded UN-Women will not be compatible with carrying out its mandate.

68. The urgency of meeting UN-Women funding goals at this time also derives from the United Nations system Millennium Development Goals 1,000 Days of Action drive, where targets directly related to the well-being of women lag behind many of the others. The decision of Member States at the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women to undertake a 20-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[5] demonstrates renewed political impetus and momentum for action to achieve the commitments made at the Fourth World Conference on Women. As part of the 20-year review, stakeholders are called upon to assess progress made, highlight gaps and current challenges and take concrete steps for stronger implementation. This process will also be critical for strengthening gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda. UN-Women will lead preparatory processes at all levels, through its normative support and coordination work, and especially by offering assistance and support at the national level. The scope and impact of these efforts will also depend on the level of available resources.

69. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/289, resources required by UN-Women to service the normative intergovernmental processes are funded from the regular budget and approved by the General Assembly. Resources required to service the operational intergovernmental processes and operational activities at all levels are funded from voluntary contributions and approved by the Executive Board.

70. In preparing its biennial programme budget, UN-Women complies with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8). Pursuant to the approval by the General Assembly of the use of a grant arrangement pertaining to the regular budget portion of UN-Women, this modality has been successfully implemented since 2011. At present, 47 posts are funded from the regular budget.

IV. Conclusions

71. After three years of operation, UN-Women is a strengthened organization in its structures, capacities and experience of how to achieve its mandate. The results achieved since it became operational on 1 January 2011 confirm that the decision to establish the Entity was sound, and has significantly and successfully strengthened the gender equality architecture of the United Nations.

72. The relevance and added value of the mandate of UN-Women as a composite entity that integrates normative support and coordination functions with operational activities has been amply demonstrated. UN-Women consistently provides leadership and a strong voice for women and girls at all levels. It provides effective

[5] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

substantive and technical expertise and advocacy support to enhance the normative and policy environment. Assistance and initiatives of the Entity at the national level, with a range of stakeholders, make a difference in the daily lives of women and girls. The effective consultation of the Entity with civil society organizations amplifies their role and contributions, and its leadership of the United Nations system ensures that the system as a whole now takes responsibility for achieving the goal of gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment. The mandate of UN-Women is universal, recognizing that no country has achieved gender equality.

73. At a time of universal commitment by Member States to achieving gender equality and women's rights and empowerment, but also of a climate of continued financial constraints and long-standing challenges and new and emerging crises in all parts of the world, it is critical that all stakeholders continue to solidify progress made and accelerate action and investment to effectively overcome gaps that perpetuate inequality and discrimination against women and girls.

74. Two key opportunities lie ahead in this regard. First, the development of the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals provide a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build on the lessons of the Millennium Development Goals by retaining the priority and the focus given to gender equality through a stand-alone goal to achieve gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment, while at the same time ensuring that gender equality is comprehensively integrated into all goals, targets and indicators that may be developed in the new framework. Second, the 20-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action provides renewed impetus and momentum to accelerate achievement of the commitments made at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

75. Going forward, UN-Women will seize these and all other opportunities to be a leading voice and advocate for gender equality, and to make a lasting difference for women and girls everywhere.